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**Environment Department Issues a “BOIL WATER ORDER” for  
Brush Ranch School Water System**

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department’s (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau has advised the Brush Ranch School water system to issue a “boil water order” for its consumers.

The Brush Ranch School water system serves approximately 150-200 consumers in San Miguel County, located approximately 10 miles north of the Village of Pecos, in the Upper Pecos Canyon area, on State Road 63. The school’s water system was put on a “boil water advisory” today, October 15, 2004, due to bacteriological contamination that exceeded the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for *E.coli*. NMED requires that the system owner and operator notify all customers served by that system of this finding.

Consumers of the Brush Ranch School water system are advised to boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking, and dishwashing.

The presence of *E. coli* in water indicates that the water may have been in contact with sewage or animal wastes, and could contain disease-causing organisms. Most strains of *E. coli* are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals. However, a positive test for *E. coli* in the drinking water supply may indicate the presence of dangerous strains of *E. coli* or other disease-causing organisms, which are sometimes found in sewage or animal wastes. These types of organisms may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and, in rare cases, even death. Children, the elderly, and immuno-compromised individuals are at an increased risk for illness.

Actions have been and will be further initiated to identify the possible source(s) of contamination, complete any mechanical repairs if applicable, and establish acceptable disinfection and flush out the water system. In addition, the Drinking Water Bureau will continue to assist with trouble-shooting to identify the source of the problem along with the assistance of their contractor, New Mexico Rural Water Association.

The New Mexico Department of Health has also been notified and will remain on alert for any health effects linked to this water quality issue.

For more information contact Chris Serazio, Environmental Specialist, NMED, at (505) 827-1400 x.1026 or Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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